Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 47 at line 5 (as previously amended) with the following amended paragraph:

The deletion mutants were created by sequentially introducing stop codons in the cytoplasmic domain of cyc, in gaps of 10-20 amino acids. The DNA encoding the full-length cyc or its deletion mutants were introduced into the pGADT7 prey vector (Clontech Laboratories, Inc.) for testing their binding to NIK in the SFY526 heterologous yeast strain by the two hybrid assay. The SFY526 yeast strain is prototrophic for TRP and Leu. pGBKT plasmids (bait vector) have the Trp1 wild type gene and pGAD has the wild type Leu2 gene. Thus, only doubly transfected yeast will grow on selective Leu Trp media. Functional GAL4 will be restored in doubly transfected yeast when the chimeric proteins fused to GAL4 domains interact, bringing the activation domain and DNA binding domain of GAL4 to close proximity. The level of LAC-Z expression is indicative of the strength of the protein-protein interaction. Lac-Z activity was assessed by the standard beta-gal/colony lift filter assay (Clontech Laboratories, Inc., Yeast Protocol Handbook, Chapter VI).

OK TO ENTER: /CMW/

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 59 at line 8 as previously amended with the following amended paragraph:

The two-Hybrid system used for screening was the MATCHMAKER version III (Clontech Laboratories, Inc.). In this system the bait gene (NIK gene) is expressed as a fusion to the GAL4 DNA binding domain (DNA-BD), while the prey genes or cDNA library is expressed as a fusion to the GAL4 activation domain (AD). When the DNA-BD and AD are brought into proximity, transcription of four reporter genes is activated (encoding HIS, ADE, lacZ and α-gal).

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 59 at line 13 with the following amended paragraph:

A human bone marrow library (Clontech Laboratories, Inc. cat# HY4053AH) has been selected as the prey, based on evidences indicating a pivotal role of NIK in the lymphoid system development and function.